Worcestershire Recorder

Newsletter of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society

Edition 110
Winter 2024/25

The Worcestershire Conquest Hoard

Tales from the 18th-century Worcester Consistory Court

Excavations at Heads Mill

Contents

Chair's Letter 3

News 4

Features:

From the Mediterranean to the Malverns: the Worcestershire Conquest Hoard 6

The Markings on the Walls: Historic Graffiti at St Eadburgha's Church, Broadway 7

Tales from the 18th-century Worcester Consistory Court 9

Excavations at Head's Mill, Shrawley 13

Book Reviews

Saint Simon de Montfort: the Miracles, Laments, Prayers, and Hymns 19

Three Choirs Festival in Ten Concerts 20

Events 22

A Warm Welcome to New Members:

D. Brown
C. Buckley
S. Buckley
K. Harrod
D. Jones
A. Lacey
F. Llewellyn
K. Macdonald
S. Parkes
K. Pope
J. Wedgwood Pound

Worcestershire Archaeological Society
Committee 2024/25
Chair: Helen Loney
Deputy Chair: Murray Andrews
Secretary: Andrew Walker
Programme Secretary: James Dinn
Treasurer: Paula Wittenberg
Editor (Transactions): Shelagh Norton
Excursions Secretary: Bob Ruffle
Membership Secretary: Vacant
Other Members: Victoria Bryant, Vicky Fletcher, Kate Potter-Farrant, Heather Taylor, Robin Whittaker

Officers not on the Committee
Curator: Murray Andrews
Editor (Recorder): Murray Andrews
Publicity Officer: Kerry Whitehouse
Librarian: Theresa Oakley
Technical Officer: Peter Walker
Webmaster: Rachael Hall
Archaeological Advisor: Chris Guy

Registered Charity No. 517092
ISSN 1474-2691

Website
www.worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk/

Facebook
Worcestershire Archaeological Society

Twitter
@WorcsArchSoc

Neither the Committee of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society nor the Editor is responsible for any statements or opinions expressed in the Worcestershire Recorder, the authors of the contributions alone being responsible for the same.

Cover illustration: Selection of Roman *denarii* from the Worcestershire Conquest Hoard, courtesy of Museums Worcestershire

Chair's Letter

by Helen Loney

Dear Member,

It is already time for the Winter issue of the Recorder, which means that time is passing by quickly. I have a couple of things to relate to you all, and a couple of announcements for the future.

We are rethinking the excursions for the upcoming year, and you can expect a short questionnaire asking your opinions about what you would like to see and attend in the future. So far, we have had a few ad hoc events, including the well-attended Elsie Matley Moore exhibition reception at the National Trust's Greyfriars house on 14 February. We have Althea Woodiwiss of the National Trust to thank for organising that on our behalf. Future smaller scale excursions and events will be announced closer to the time, but again, if anyone has any suggestions, feel free to contact myself or Andrew Walker.

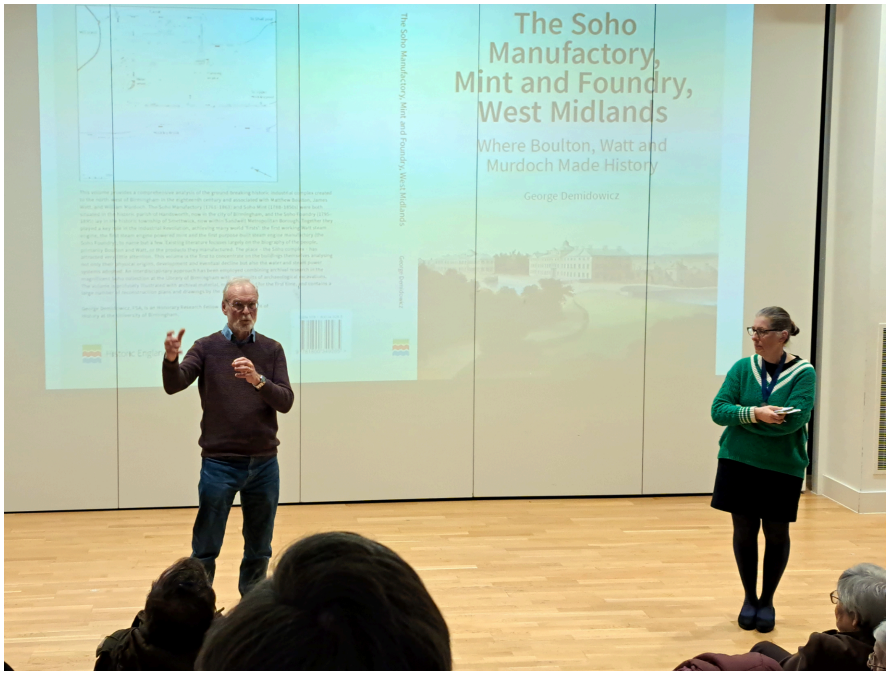
This year's lecture series has been so far very successful, again. Thanks to James Dinn for his hard work! One of his innovations was an online evening on four short talks of local interest. This was very well attended, and we are pleased that so many people participated in the online discussions as well. We hope to introduce this as a regular event for next year. We have returned to face-to-face talks, and are looking forward to welcoming Della Hook, Steve Sherlock and Chris Dyer over the next few months.

I want to announce the success of one of the Society's contributions. Last autumn the Society contributed to the efforts to keep the Roman coin hoard from Leigh and Bransford in Worcestershire by providing funds to produce the booklet accompanying the exhibition at Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery. This booklet has sold out twice and has raised at least 10 times the amount of money as was spent, with all the profits going towards the campaign to retain the hoard in Worcestershire. This is testament to the generosity and enthusiasm of the people of Worcestershire and the members of this Society. We will continue to support this campaign in the future.

Finally, as we approach the upcoming AGM, we will see a change of membership of the committee. My time as Chair is now fast approaching its end, and soon it will be the turn of Murray Andrews. When I say time is passing quickly, I particularly feel the end of my time as chair racing up to me. It has been a pleasure serving the membership, and I look forward to supporting Murray as I step down and take my new position as Deputy Chair.

Best wishes,

Dr Helen Loney



Our outgoing Chair in action: Helen taking questions at George Demidowicz's lecture to the Society on 3 April 2023

News

The Worcestershire Conquest Hoard

In October 2023 a hoard of 1368 Iron Age and Roman gold and silver coins was unearthed near Leigh and Bransford (see p. 6 below). Buried in circa AD 55, this remarkable discovery is one of the largest hoards of the Roman Conquest era ever found in Britain, and one of the largest hoards of the reign of Nero (AD 54–68) known from the entire Roman Empire. Research into the hoard is ongoing, and is being led by a team of experts from University College London, Museums Worcestershire, and Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service.

The hoard was declared Treasure in June 2024, and Museums Worcestershire are keen to acquire it for the county. While a final valuation has not yet been decided, it is likely to cost upwards of £100,000. If the museum is unable to raise the total, the hoard is likely to be dispersed on the market. Fundraising is being led by the Worcestershire Heritage, Art & Museums charity, who have launched a crowdfunding campaign to support the acquisition. Donations can be made online via the Museum website, or in-person at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, where the hoard will be on display at a free exhibition from 11 January to 30 March 2025.

The Worcestershire Archaeology Society is keen to support the campaign, and has sponsored the production of a full colour booklet to accompany the exhibition. Copies are available for £7.50 from Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, with all proceeds going towards the hoard's acquisition and permanent display.

Repairs to Powick Bridge

Since its partial collapse in last January's floods (see *Recorder* 109, Spring 2024), progress is thankfully now underway with the restoration of Powick's Grade I listed medieval bridge, the site of the first skirmish between Royalist and Parliamentarian forces during the English Civil War. Following the preparation of a site compound and working platform in August and September, groundworks started in November with a programme of borehole sampling, which will assess the riverbed's stability for further works. This work will be followed by the installation of a temporary frame, which will serve to support the structure while plans for a permanent reconstruction are developed alongside the Environment Agency and Historic England. The final phases of work at the site are expected to begin in 2025.

Heritage at Risk 2024

On 14 November 2024 Historic England released the latest edition of the Heritage at Risk Register, the annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. The report lists 435 historic buildings, places of worship, archaeological sites, parks and gardens, and conservation areas at risk in the West Midlands, including 50 in Worcestershire. Many have sadly been at risk for some time, like the Iron Age Wychbury Camp and the Grade I listed Westwood House, but some are new additions to the list – most notably All Saints church in Worcester, where the exterior stonework and windows are in poor repair. Fortunately, however, the total number of Worcestershire sites on the Register continues to fall (see *Recorder* 109, Spring 2024), and recent conservation projects have helped take some long-suffering sites off the list, including the magnificent medieval churches of St Mary and All Saints at Hampton Lovett and St Helen at Worcester.

Bromsgrove Court Leet archive

In September 2024 the Bromsgrove Court Leet records were made available to the public for the first time. This archive, which is now deposited with the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, contains more than 3500 items relating to the meetings and business of the manor court from the 18th to 20th centuries, and took more than ten months of work to catalogue – no mean feat! The full catalogue, which was produced with financial and voluntary support from the Bromsgrove Court Leet, is now available online via the Explore the Past website, and the original documents can be accessed in the archive search room on Level 2 at The Hive.

Bewdley archives now at The Hive

Thousands of historical documents from Bewdley have found a new permanent home at The Hive this autumn thanks to a major new donation from the Bewdley Historical Research Group (BHRG). The collection of over 10,000 documents, including 17th- to 20th-century house deeds, were kept until recently in the house of the late local historian Charles Purcell, and were temporarily stored at Bewdley Museum while BHRG members worked to organise, catalogue, and scan the archive. The transfer is a significant milestone, and will ensure that the collection can be preserved for research and enjoyment for years to come.

District Council steps in at Raven Hotel

Wychavon District Council has made a high profile intervention in the efforts to secure the Raven Hotel, a Grade II listed Tudor building on Droitwich's St Andrew's Street. The action comes after several years of neglect and criminal damage at the site (see *Recorder* 108, Autumn 2023), which escalated after an incident on 24 September 2024, when parts of the

guttering fell into the road. In November 2024 a court order was secured under Section 77 of the Building Act 1984, requiring the owners to secure the structure and make the site safe, but a subsequent inspection established that the required works were either inadequate or had not been carried out. After the deadline passed on 8 December, the District Council installed scaffolding and additional propping to support the building, and began a programme of works to make the roof watertight (see photo above). The District Council will also undertake a survey of the building to identify other necessary repairs. The cost of these works will be claimed back from the owner.

Cripplegate fountain restored

Restoration work on the historic Grade II listed fountain in Worcester's Cripplegate Park was completed in August 2024, following a £25,000 investment from Worcester City Council. Gifted to the city in 1858 by local industrialist and MP Richard Padmore, the cast iron fountain has been cleaned and repaired, and minor re-pointing was undertaken on the stone plinth and pool. The fountain has been a landmark in Cripplegate Park since it was re-installed there in 1924 – and, hopefully, will remain so for years to come.

Sale of Ombersley Court library

On 17 October 2024 the historic Ombersley Court library was sold at auction by Chorley's of Prinknash Abbey, Gloucestershire. Formed over more than three centuries by the Sandys family, the library is one of the more notable county house collections to have come up for auction in recent decades, and included hundreds of original volumes dating from the 16th century onwards. The sales catalogue provides a rare opportunity to glimpse into the interests and intellectual worlds of one of Worcestershire's pre-eminent landed families, which broached matters as diverse as classical literature, religious doctrine, agricultural improvement, geography, natural science, and even boxing and self-defence!

Untold Stories: Miss Matley Moore

On 20–30 August 2024 the National Trust ran a small exhibition at Greyfriars called 'Untold Stories: Miss Matley Moore'. The exhibition sheds light on the remarkable life of Elsie Matley Moore (1900–85), a talented watercolour artist and restorer – as well as a stalwart member of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society. The National Trust hope to re-run the exhibition in early 2025, and kindly arranged for a private showing for the Society on 14 February.

Almonry Restoration Project

Readers of the *Recorder* will be familiar with longstanding conservation issues at the Evesham Almonry, a Grade I listed medieval monastic building and local museum that has been on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register since 2016 (see *Recorder* 109, Spring 2024). Staff have been working tirelessly to secure the funding and assistance needed to address immediate structural issues around the roofing and walls, and to improve the overall condition of the building for years to come. This work paid off in March 2024, when Arts Council England agreed to provide a £2.1m grant for structural repairs to the building through the Museum Estate and Development Fund. Efforts to secure National Lottery funds for refurbishment are ongoing, and we wish them the best of success!

From the Mediterranean to the Malverns: the Worcestershire Conquest Hoard

by Murray Andrews, Deborah Fox, and Kate Potter-Farrant

In October 2023 a remarkable discovery was made near Bransford and Leigh, less than 10 km from Worcester in the shadow of the Malvern Hills: a pot filled with 1368 gold and silver coins, buried at the beginning of Roman Britain.

The Worcestershire Conquest Hoard, as the find is now known, is one of the largest coin hoards of the time of the Roman Conquest (AD 43–84) ever found in Britain, and is one of the largest hoards of the reign of Nero (AD 54–68) known from the entire Roman Empire. It consists mainly of Roman silver denarii, minted during the Roman Republic and the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors. These coins were minted at nearly a dozen mints across the Roman world: from ancient Hispania (modern Spain) in the west to Anatolia (modern Turkey) in the east, and from Sicily in the south to ancient Gallia (modern France) in the north. They are extremely well preserved, and bear designs evoking the politics, religions, and social life of the Roman world. Interestingly, two of the coins in the hoard are non-Roman issues. These include a silver denarius of Juba I of Numidia (60–46 BC), minted in Utica in modern day Tunisia, as well as the only gold coin in the hoard: a stater of Eisu (c. AD 20–45), probably a ruler of the Dobunni, a British tribe based in the Severn-Cotswold region. The face value of the hoard would have been very large, equivalent to more than six years' pay for a Roman legionary, and suggests that its owner was a person of considerable wealth and status.

The latest coins in the hoard are two denarii of Nero, minted early in his reign in AD 55. These coins are barely worn, and had hardly seen circulation by the time the hoard was buried. Interestingly, they are both struck from the same reverse die, probably as part of the same production sequence. They almost certainly entered Britain as part of a single parcel of coins shipped directly from Rome, probably for official purposes: for example, the payment of soldiers and civil servants. These two coins set the hoard's burial date in the mid- to late AD 50s, right in the midst of the campaigns of Aulus Didius Gallus (AD 52–7) and Quintus Veranius (AD 57/8) against the rebel tribes of Wales and the Marches, and just a few years before the outbreak of the Boudican Rebellion.

© Museums Worcestershire

Based on evidence recorded at the findspot, the hoard seems to have been originally hidden within a narrow-necked Severn Valley Ware jar, a type known to have been made at kilns in the Malvern area. It was then buried in a ditch, possibly below a tree, which may have been intended as a marker for recovery. The nature of the ditch is unclear, but may have formed the boundary to a farm, field, or stock enclosure, examples of which have been recorded elsewhere on the fertile soils adjoining the River Teme and the River Severn. Taken as a whole, the evidence from the hoard's contents, container, and archaeological context suggest that its owner was probably a wealthy individual with links to the Roman military administration: perhaps a leading member of the Dobunnic elite, with contracts to supply grain or livestock to the army as it marched westwards into Wales.

In July 2024 the hoard was declared Treasure by HM Coroner, and Museums Worcestershire has expressed an interest in acquiring it for the county collection. It is currently undergoing valuation by the Treasure Valuation Committee, an independent body advising the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport. This will be based on the market value of the coins, and forms the reward to be given to the landowner and finders. Once the final valuation has been agreed, Museums Worcestershire will have up to four months to raise the money, which is likely to be a six-figure sum. If the money cannot be raised, the hoard will be returned to the landowner and/or the finders, and may be lost to the public forever.

Fundraising is being led by the Worcestershire Heritage, Art & Museums charity, which aims to raise money towards the acquisition and permanent display of the hoard in Worcestershire. At the time of writing, nearly £10,000 has been raised via an online crowdfunder, and a temporary exhibition of the hoard at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum (11 January–30 March 2025) has given thousands of visitors their first chance to come face-to-face with this remarkable find. The hoard has captured public interest across the globe, and with your support we can secure it for Worcestershire for years to come.

The Markings on the Walls: Historic Graffiti at St Eadburgha's Church, Broadway

by Murray Andrews

Nestled beneath the wooded slopes of the Snowshill escarpment, the Grade I listed medieval church of St Eadburgha, Broadway, is one of Worcestershire's southernmost parish churches, but is perhaps more properly seen as one of the northernmost parish churches of the Cotswold tradition (Fig. 1). Established as a holding of Pershore Abbey by the time of the Domesday Survey,[1] the church retains much of its Norman structure, with hulking Romanesque columns and west buttresses hinting at a late 12th-century footprint not entirely unlike that seen today.[2] Yet, like its Gloucestershire cousins, St Eadburgha's is perhaps most distinguished for its later medieval form, with large Perpendicular windows and embattled parapets bearing witness to prolonged phases of construction and alteration from the 14th to early 16th centuries, probably financed through the proceeds of the Cotswold wool trade.

While St Eadburgha's has no shortage of architectural gems, not all of them are very well known. This is particularly the case for its rich collection of historic graffiti, which seems to have been wholly neglected by scholars and church enthusiasts alike. This note highlights some key specimens from St Eadburgha's graffiti corpus, recorded by the author during a site visit in November 2023.

Crosses at the threshold

Inscribed crosses are among the most common forms of historic graffiti found in English churches, and examples have been recorded at more than a dozen medieval churches across Worcestershire.[3] A small cluster of these 'cross marks' can be seen scratched into the jambs of St Eadburgha's northern nave door, which are mostly of the equal-armed Greek cross (*crux immissa*) type known from Badsey, Evesham St Andrew, and elsewhere. Their simple forms defy stylistic dating, with a *terminus post quem* of *c.*1400 set by the construction of the north aisle. The purpose of cross marks is still debated, but might reflect the use of church doors for concluding sworn agreements, which were traditionally sealed with the sign of the cross.[4] However, explicitly devotional functions are suggested by the more elaborate cross marks known from Spetchley and elsewhere.[5] Either suggestion could hold for the examples found at St Eadburgha's, although their diminutive size might be less well suited to public-facing agreements (whether secular or spiritual) than to personal acts of religious devotion.

The compass and the circle

St Eadburgha's differs from from many Worcestershire churches in possessing a large collection of 'compass drawn' graffiti, including several prominent examples in the tower crossing and on the east side of the chancel arch (Fig. 2). The most basic examples are simple circles, which appear on their own or in small groupings; the latter include a cluster of interlaced circles arranged in the manner of 'Borromean rings', a design only previously reported locally at Spetchley. More elaborate examples, however, can be found on the lower levels of the east side of the chancel arch, which take the form of a pointed double-lined quatrefoil partially enclosed by a double-lined circle. These symbols have an assuredly late medieval date, with at least two examples on the south pier being partially covered by a layer of post-Reformation render. Interestingly, the north pier of the chancel arch also contains a hand drawn quatrefoil, which has the appearance of two crescents placed back-to-back.

'Compass drawn' graffiti, particularly those examples incorporating circles and geometric lenses (e.g. quatrefoils, sexfoils), have often been attributed with apotropaic functions as 'ritual protection marks',

Fig. 1: North-east facing view of St Eadburgha's church, Broadway, highlighting the extent of later medieval additions and alterations to the core Norman structure (author's photograph).

Fig. 2: Historic graffiti from the chancel and tower crossing at St Eadburgha's church, Broadway (clockwise from top left): compass drawn quatrefoil, compass drawn circle, hand drawn quatrefoil, diamond mesh, interlocking circles, and compass drawn quatrefoil beneath render (author's photographs).

intended to repel malevolent forces or otherwise entrap them in mazes of endless geometric form.[6] This interpretation may be supported by the physical association of the Broadway examples with a curious 'mesh' graffito on the north pier of the chancel arch – perhaps a kind of symbolic 'net' for capturing demons and other threats to the church and its community. Indeed, from a topographic standpoint, it seems noteworthy that such expressions of quasi-magical 'popular Christianity' are clustered at the interface of the nave and chancel, the physical and symbolic meeting point between the worlds of the clergy and the laity within the church building. This liminal status could place the graffiti at St Eadburgha's into dialogue with a wider tradition of threshold magic and ritual, whose medieval reflections extended to the creation of 'structured deposits' of objects beneath chancel arches and other church thresholds at Raunds, Iona, and elsewhere.[7] With this in mind, might these graffiti have been intended as spiritual counterparts to Broadway's pre-Reformation rood screen: a means of separating and protecting the altar, the priest, and the sacred rites from the supernatural threats of a fallen world?

Whether devotional, apotropaic, or indeed of any other nature, the proliferation of graffiti around the chancel arch at St Eadburgha's suggests that these designs were once a highly visible part of the medieval church fabric. Moreover, their presence on the east side of the chancel arch – that is, within an area reserved for the clergy and sacraments – may suggest that Broadway's medieval churchmen were actively involved in their creation, rather than passive bystanders aggrieved by parochial defacement. The finds from St Eadburgha's, then, add to a growing body of evidence for the fundamentally licit character of graffiti carving within the pre-Reformation parish church, which may have been seen as an acceptable means of physical and spiritual engagement with local places of worship.

References

1. Morris, J. (ed.), 1982 *Domesday Book: Worcestershire*, Chichester, 9.4.

2. Verey, D., 1976 *Cotswold Churches*, London, 177–8; Brooks, A., and Pevsner, N., 2007 *The Buildings of England. Worcestershire*, New Haven, 176–7.

3. Andrews, M., 2023 'Cult or contract? Cross mark graffiti in Worcesteshire churches', *Worcestershire Recorder* 107, 8–10.

4. Champion, M., 2015 *Medieval Graffiti*, London, 63–9.

5. Andrews, M., 2024 'The circle and the cross: historic graffiti and associated features at All Saints' church, Spetchley', *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser. 29, 123–35.

6. Champion *op. cit.* in fn. 4; Champion, M., 2016 'Magic on the walls: Ritual protection marks in the medieval church', in R. Hutton (ed.), *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain. A Feeling for Magic*, Basingstoke, 15–38.

7. Gilchrist, R., 2019 'Ritual objects. Placed deposits in medieval churches', in C. Ljung *et al.* (eds), *Tidens landskap: en vänbok till Anders Andrén*, Lund, 173–5.

Tales from the 18th-century Worcester Consistory Court

by Robin Whittaker

I have been working on 18th-century records of the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Worcester for nearly a decade, and have become familiar with all the various official document types such as citations, intimations, excommunications, taxations, sentences, and penances, by means of which the business of the court was carried on. Usually held in the Cathedral (Fig. 1), the Consistory Court had oversight of a range of issues, including marriage, wills, and predominantly sexual matters, including adultery, incest, and antenuptial fornication, as well as inter-personal disputes such as defamation. In the surviving court files the bulk of the papers are these formal documents, but sometimes the files contain letters received by the court officials that throw a different, more human, light on matters. Sometimes they are written by those involved in the case, but are often written by the local incumbent, sometimes seeking clemency, sometimes seeking more rigour. The following examples are taken from the court papers file for 1702,[1] and I have modernised spelling and punctuation.

A case of adultery: Mary, wife of Walter Perry, with Edward Widnell

Three letters in the file throw light on this case from the point of view of the accused woman and the accused man's wife.

No. 195 For Mr Richard Tristram, apparitor, in Worcester. Kidderminster 10 January 1702.

'These with my service to you are to request you that my husband has been very ill and I know not whether he could live till now, which has hindered his sending but since he is something better he has told me the names of his compurgators but is loath to tell me the charges; but if the intimation you speak of in your last letter might be taken out if it be not done I desire you to be so kind as to take it out or what else you see of necessity to be done and I will send you the money by the next post. Sir, I desire you to cause it to be published on a holy day which is all at present from your friend and servant, Abigail Widnell

Their names are these: Richard Best, John Haycock, Joseph Jackson, John Clark, Gregory Jonson, John Botman, Joseph Potter, [ ] Dovey.

Sir, I desire you to send me word as soon as you can what might be done.'

Meanwhile the accused, Mary Perry, is writing herself. I have in this case kept the original spelling and punctuation.

No. 200 This for Mr Tristram, Parritor in Worcester. Kidderminster February the 4 1701/2

'Mr Tristram my searvis to you and to your wife. This is to Desire you to be so kind as to stand my friend this Cort day for I ham very sicke and weeke and I Cannot tell wether I shall bee Ever well to come any more or no which is the accation of my not apearinge therefore I would Desire you to be soe kind as to stand my friend this on time to the Redaster and if god permit life and health I will apeare the next Cort day to be shure and if it lyeth in my way to searve you as much or any of youre family I will. I would desire you to be soe kind as to send me word how many women I must bring with me when I come. I would Desire you to send me word by sume of them that Come over tomorrow. So I remaine youre loveing Friend Mary Pary'

On 16 April 1702 Mary was cited, with intimation, on the accusation of adultery and confessed and indicated she wished to 'redeem her former good name and credit' by purging herself through six neighbours, and the document names her compurgators. Meanwhile, Abigail is deeper in problems:

No. 206 For Mr Lee, proctor, in Sidbury in Worcester. Kidderminster 28 April 1702.

'Sir, these are to acquaint you that the business between my husband and Walter Perry in your court has caused his creditors to come so fast upon him that he was forced to go and leave me with 3 small children and my landlord has seized my goods and timber and left me nothing but my labour to raise them which is like to be but small for I have scarce been out of doors this 3 weeks; some of the weeks I could go no further than I was carried and I can get strength but slowly. Sir, I hope you will consider my case and acquaint the court. It may be you may think it is a sham but you may send to Mr Tinker or any one in the town and know the truth to my sorrow. So hoping you will consider my case and send me word what will be done in the thing which was at first more malice than credit on Walter's part, Sir, I remain your servant, Abigail Widnell.'

The case of Joseph Whitterne/Whitton of Pershore

The letters presented above mention the use of compurgators in a cause. One way of defending oneself in court was to bring forward a group of compurgators who could vouch for one's good character and hence innocence. This might seem an easy way out, but the officials went to great lengths to check up on the bona fides of the proposed compurgators, as the following two letters show. On

Fig. 1: Worcester Cathedral in the 18th century: Johannes Kip's engraving of 1724 (public domain via the British Library)

26 February 1702 Joseph Whitterne/Whitton was cited for adultery with Mary Tovey of Atch Lench.

No. 204 To Mr Oliver at the Registrar's Office in Worcester. Pershore 11 April 1702

'The men which you say Joseph Whitterne intends to produce for his compurgators are all of them honest credible and substantial men and all of them freeholders in our town and neither of them has ever been under the like fame for incontinence nor suspected (that I know or ever heard) to be guilty of the like crime or any other immorality and they are all of them very conformable to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England and of good esteem in our town. Job Milward is by trade a tailor but deals in a great many of other matters. Mr Willis is a wealthy husbandman. Mr Smith is no trade but lives upon his estate. William Bullingham is a wheeler. Richard Bissell is a shoemaker and William Grey is a husbandman and keeps an inn, all of them of good credit, reputation, and substance. This I will assure you is a just and true account of them and I hope will be accepted by Mr Chancellor as such, to whom pray present my most humble service. Sir, I am your most humble servant, John Clarke.'[2]

No. 205 These to Mr Oliver at the Registrar's Office in Worcester. Pershore 15 April 1702.

'Sir, Mr Willis one of Whitterne's compurgators being obliged to attend at Mrs Charlet's funeral tomorrow he has procured Mr Bell a mercer in the said town who is a very honest, credible, and substantial man and of good esteem in our town. Nor did I ever hear that he was ever under the like fame or suspected to be guilty of the like crime or any other immorality. Sir, I am your humble servant, John Clarke.'

On 26 March Whitton had given notice that he intended to purge himself through six neighbours.

The case of Philip Harris of Evesham

This case also throws light on the sorts of investigations that went on behind the scenes before a case came to court, and how influential friends could help. On 5 February 1702 Philip Harris of Evesham St. Lawrence was cited for adultery with Margaret Orchard of Evesham All Saints. Joseph Jephcott, the rector of Evesham All Saints (as well as being a prebend of Worcester Cathedral), wrote as follows.

No. 202 To Mr Thomas Oliver. Evesham 25 February 1702

'Sir, the forms of penance and intimation came so late on Saturday night I was forced to delay till the 22nd. The poor man was very submissive and performed his penance very humbly and regularly to the great satisfaction of the congregation and glory of God. Whereupon I humbly intreat Mr Chancellor to remit the remaining part of his penance and that you'll send a bill of fees. Pray deal favourably with him for he is a poor man. The churchwardens desire that Mr Chancellor will proceed speedily and effectually against the woman, she was personally cited and I sent the apparitor on Monday to advise her to appear next Thursday but I think she will not. I would have the excommunication against her sent me on or before Saturday night that I might denounce it on Sunday next as I shall be abroad. I read the intimation and Philip Harris will appear with his compurgators. Pray let him be dismissed as soon as you can. They are all men of honest and good fame and one of them, Thomas Owen, is able to give some reason that relates to the woman why he believes the man innocent viz. what he heard her say. This matter has been strictly examined by a Justice of the Peace for our town, some of the depositions I have read lately wherein are several particulars that tend to lessen the credit of the whore's accusations against him and to clear his

innocence. Other depositions were taken by Mr Walker who is not yet come from London. On the whole matter I find many people think him innocent, which I also hope. Pray communicate this to Mr Chancellor with my humble service. Pray let this and the other lewd woman be proceeded against speedily. Philip Haris brings in five lest any one shall be excepted against. I am Sir your faithful friend and humble servant, Joseph Jephcott.'

Neighbourly disputes

People were very keen to protect their reputations from slander. On 1 December 1701 Ann, wife of William Swan of Kidderminster, was cited for defamation of Hannah, wife of John Hinton. The local incumbent, however, worked behind the scenes to bring about harmony.

No. 198 These to the Reverend Mr Price, Chancellor of the diocese of Worcester at his house in Worcester. Kidderminster 31 January 1702.

'According to your advice I have discussed with Hannah Hinton and Ann Swan of this parish about the difference between them and by persuading the latter to acknowledge her fault and pay something towards her adversary's charges have composed it. And therefore desire the favour of you to prevent all further proceedings in the Consistory concerning this matter and you will do a charity to them and a kindness also to, Reverend Sir, your most humble and faithful servant, J. Howard.'[3]

Sexual incontinence

The following run of letters and documents relates to a matter to which local inhabitants had alerted the authorities and which progressed in a far from straightforward way.

No. 197 To the Reverend Mr Chancellor Price at Worcester. 17 January 1702.

'Mr Chancellor, my forgetfulness on Wednesday last enforced the trouble of these to acquaint you that one Edward Crockett servant to Thomas Caunt the miller in Leigh was seen in bed with Elizabeth Nott of Leigh aforesaid widow to whom he is not married. Elizabeth Cole and Elizabeth Greene can attest the truth thereof upon oath. I hope you will take care to let them know it is a fault. I am, Sir, your humble servant, Edward Taylor.'

As early as 2 October 1701 Edward Crockett had, in response to a citation, 'confessed the fame, but denied the fault' when accused of adultery. On both 6 February and 26 March Elizabeth Nott and Edward Crockett were cited for adultery. On 16 April Elizabeth Nott confessed her fault and wished to redeem her good name by purgation through four neighbours, and to do penance. So, on 28 May, Elizabeth does penance in Leigh church, saying that by 'yielding to unlawful desires I have been guilty of immodest dalliance and lay in bed with Edward Crockett, miller, and being suspected of committing fornication with him'. Clearly the matter did not stop there. On 28 May Elizabeth is cited again for not appearing to certify the performance of her penance. Meanwhile, on 28 May Edward is also cited for 'failing in his purgation' and not appearing to see penance enjoined on him. On 10 September he is again cited for failing in his purgation and is found guilty of fornication with Elizabeth and enjoined penance..

Here the local incumbent steps in again, writing to the Chancellor:

No. 219 For the Reverend and Worshipful Mr. Price, Chancellor at Worcester. Leigh, 12 September 1702.

'[Sir], by further discoursing my criminal neighbours I hope they are somewhat sensible of your condition, more particularly the man seems very penitent for what he has done amiss and promises next week with his now wife to attend you and will pay his submission to your court. I have some reason to believe they are married, having seen this day an antedated certificate of their marriage which I suppose you will hereafter have your sight of. In the interim all due service attend you and yours from Sir your most humble servant J. Portman.

I should be glad were my neighbour Caunt made sensible of his crimes, being the most obstinate fellow I ever met with and cares not what injuries he does to religion or its professors.

Mr Portman may forbear the publication of the excommunication against Crockett for one Sunday if any good use can be made of the delay. J.P.'

A couple of weeks later, Portman writes again:

No. 222. The Reverend [ ]ful Mr Price [ ] at Worcester. Leigh 30 September 1702.

'Sir, my neighbour Crockett now seems desirous to be restored to the communion of the church, and in order to that tells me you require my letter. He said he is willing to submit himself to you and do as you order but hopes you would be favourable which leaves me no more to add but due humble services to yourself and yours from, Sir, your very humble servant J. Portman.

I sent the apparitor to you, as you directed me, but nothing as yet is done towards bringing my neighbour Caunt before you. So if now he may and does go on freely in his wickedness and infuses his pernicious notions as he pleases into the minds of the parishioners etc.'

We will hear more of Caunt before the end. In October both Edward and Elizabeth do penance for incontinence. Is that the end of the matter? Apparently not, for in November both Elizabeth and Edward are

required to show cause for their contempt and threatened with excommunication. Here we meet our friend Caunt again, Edward's boss. He is cited for profaning the Lord's Day, encouraging others to do so, affirming that fornication is no sin and tempting Elizabeth Nott 'who goes under the name of Elizabeth Crockett' to the foul sin of uncleanness.

The final twist in the story is a happy one. On 8 February 1703, in Leigh church, J. Portman married Edward Crockett to Elizabeth Nott alias Crockett.

Clandestine marriage

The church kept very close control of marriage, and came down heavily on those that tried to evade the proper procedures. Doubts had obviously been raised about the validity of the marriage of Francis and Sarah Hunt. On 18 March 1701 a Mr Prosser of Alveley in Shropshire had written to Henry Mugg, vicar of Inkberrow. Francis and Sarah had been challenged to prove the validity of their marriage. Proser claims to have married them in Feckenham in November 1697 'at the time I supplied Mr Haughton in his time of weakness'. He says the licence is no longer in his custody.

On 10 January 1702 Francis and Sarah are excommunicated for not appearing to prove their marriage. Seeking to be absolved, they submit later that year and do penance:

No. 203 10 March 1702

'Married in Mr Prosser's dwelling house some time in November '96 before daylight in the morning and that they have lived together ever since as husband and wife.

We Francis Hunt and Sarah Hunt do here in the presence of Almighty God and you present humbly confess and acknowledge that in the month of November in the year of our Lord God one six hundred ninety seven [corrected from six] last we were clandestinely married together in the house of Henry Prosser clerk some time before daylight in the morning by him the said Henry Prosser being without banns duly published or licence (as since appears) obtained from our Ordinary being deceived and induced to believe we might be so lawfully married together by the said Mr Prosser he then assuring us that he had procured a licence for our said marriage as we had desired and given him money to do, for which breach of the law of this church and nation as aforesaid we are heartily sorry and do humbly beg pardon of God' our Ordinary and all others offended thereby. We do sincerely promise never to offend in the like manner again but will live obedient to the laws ecclesiastical of this land unto our lives end.'

Incumbents were equally keen to protect their reputations in such matters, as this slightly panicky letter attests:

No. 201 For the worshipful John Price Esq. Chancellor of the diocese of Worcester. 5 February 1702

'The bearer Mr Cook came to me with a young woman Elizabeth Cartwright alias Harper of Ombersley on the 11th of July last and brought with them a licence out of the Arches dated the 21st of June before, by virtue of which I married them in my church at Hampton according to the order of the Church of England. What methods were taken to obtain the licence I hope I am not obliged to answer for. I do assure you had I known any irregularity I had not ventured upon it, being desirous always to approve myself, Sir, your most obedient humble servant Charles Stephens.'[4]

The burdens of dealing with a will

The complications of dealing with a deceased's estate must have weighed heavily on ordinary people of little education. The local rector is clearly sympathetic to the plight of one couple.

No. 199 For the Reverend Mr John Price, Chancellor of Worcester these humbly present. 28 January 1702.

'Mr Chancellor, I have denounced the excommunication against Roses, though with regret considering their poor circumstances. The woman is old and not fit for travail, about 80 and cries much, the man is ignorant as well as his mother and deeply concerned. He has been told all along as they have overpaid the assets they were safe enough, the inventory which has been put into your court once if not twice amounted to £83 2s. 0d. and the debts they have paid upon the balance exceeded £48 16s. 0d. I have advised the man to come in and submit which if he do I hope you will be favourable to them. They tell me they have no money and I believe it to be true. I thought good to certify this much and leave the premises to your grave and serious consideration, who am your humble servant to command, Abraham Swan.'[5]

On 10 January he had had to excommunicate Ann Rose, widow of Richard Rose, for not appearing to bring in the will of William Rose.

The incomplete survival of the court papers means that it is not always possible to know what happened in the end in many cases – in fact, often cases were settled out of court and just disappear from the record. However, these letters, a small sample from the many that do happily survive, do show the human side of being involved in a consistory cause, whether as a party or as an official or incumbent.

References

1. Worcester, Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service (WAAS), ref 795.02 BA 2336/2b.

2. John Clarke, curate of Pershore Holy Cross, curate of Wick, and vicar of Pershore St Andrew's.

3. John Howard, vicar of Kidderminster, 1701–29.

4. Charles Stephens, rector of Hampton Lovett, 1659–1717.

5. Abraham Swan, rector of Ilmington 1669–1708

Excavations at Head's Mill, Shrawley

by Murray Andrews, Francesca Llewellyn, and Kate Potter-Farrant

In 2012–14 the North Worcestershire Archaeology Group (NWAG) undertook a programme of archaeological fieldwork at Head's Mill, Shrawley (NGR SO 795 641). The project aimed to identify and record the remains of a ruined watermill, which was first documented in 1389 and continued in use until the mid-19th century. Several seasons of fieldwork were undertaken at the site (WSM47465), which included a measured and photographic survey of extant structural remains and the excavation of seven trenches in areas of moderate to high archaeological potential. This article summarises the results of these investigations, which have provided new insights into the form, function, and working history of the mill during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

The site

Head's Mill is located 200 m south of East Grove Farm in the parish of Shrawley, 7.5 km south-west of Stourport and 11 km north-west of Worcester (Fig. 1). The site lies in an area of gently eastwards sloping ground on the north side of the Shrawley Brook, a tributary of the River Severn that defines the historic parish boundary between Shrawley and Little Witley. The underlying geology consists of Helsby Sandstone Formation sandstone, lain down as fluvial deposits approximately 242 to 247.2 million years ago in the Triassic period, which contributes to a soil profile defined by freely draining slightly acidic loams.[1] These environmental factors have heavily influenced the historic landscape of this part of Shrawley, which contains extensive areas of ancient and semi-natural deciduous woodland, including a large tract immediately west of the site known as Broomy Bank Dingle.

Historical background

Place names, archaeological finds, and early charters suggest that the land around the Shrawley Brook has been heavily wooded since at least the 8th century,[2] and was only gradually settled through piecemeal colonisation and assarting. These processes are reflected in local place names like East Grove Farm, Hazelhurst Farm, and Hurst Farm, and almost certainly form the background to the foundation of Head's Mill.

The earliest references to a mill on the site appear in the records of the manor of Shrawley, where a water mill known as 'Heddesmill' is first mentioned in

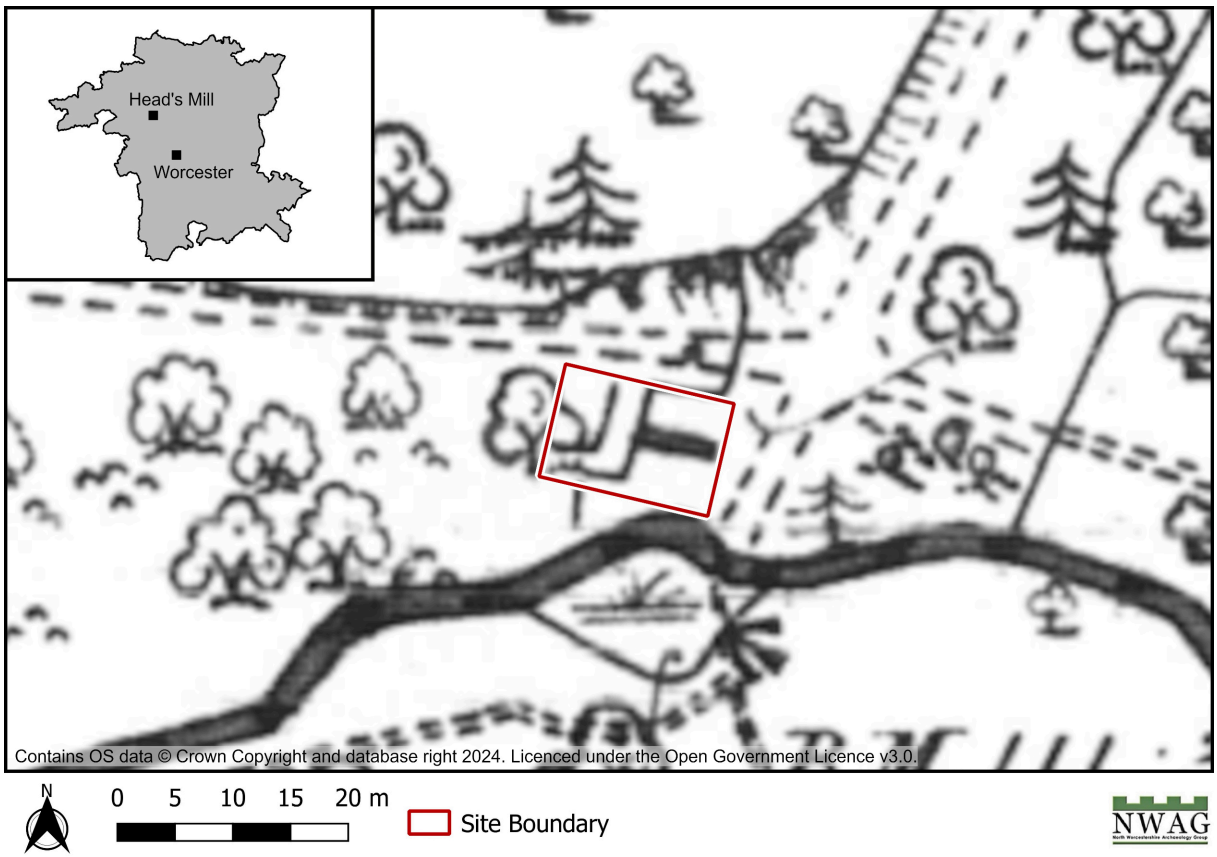


Fig. 1: Location map, with the excavated site boundary (red box) overlain on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 1:2500 County Series map of 1884–5. The wheel pit and the wall of the mill pond were still visible at this date.

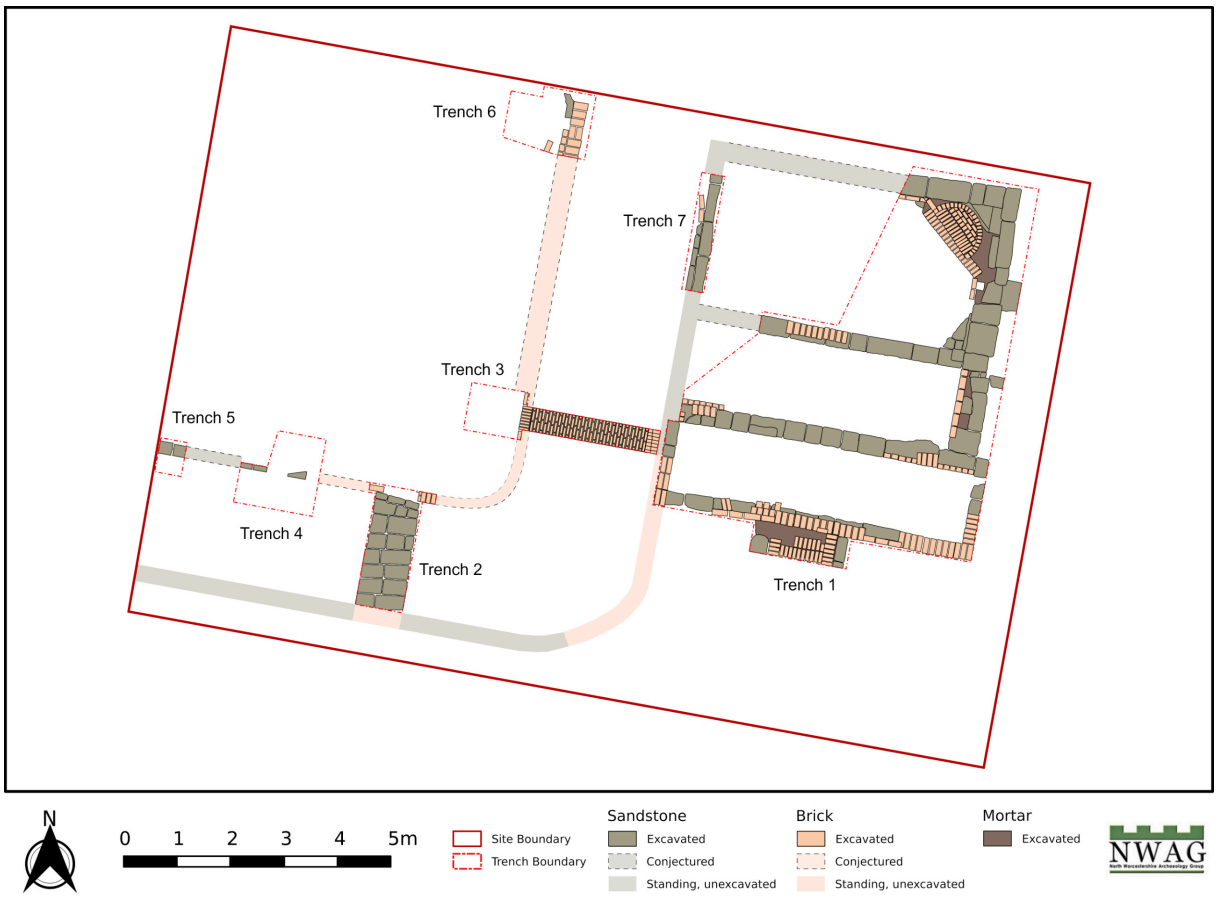


Fig. 2: Site plan, showing locations of trenches and details of excavated and standing structures recorded during the project. The location of conjectural structures that were not observed during fieldwork are indicated by dashed lines.

1389.[3] Though formally a manorial appurtenance, the mill was rarely held in demesne during the medieval and post-medieval periods, and was instead leased to a series of tenant millers at rates ranging from 10*s.* 0*d.* to 12*s.* 1*d.* per annum. Judging from surviving manor records, the most prolific tenant family was the Severns of East Grove Farm, who first entered into the mill in the 1440s and would later hold the property through copyhold tenure for most of the 17th and 18th centuries.[4]

On Isaac Taylor's 1772 map of Worcestershire the mill is named as 'Tho. Foley Esqs. Mill', a reference to its then owner, Thomas Foley, 1st Baron Foley (1716–77), who retained the property as part of the vast Witley Court Estate.[5] While Taylor's map offers no illustration of the mill and its buildings, we can gain some insights into its appearance through a description in a 1793 estate rent review produced after the death of Thomas' son, the notorious *bon vivant* Thomas Foley, 2nd Baron Foley (1742–93). Now known as Lord Foley's Recapitulation, this document describes the mill as an overshot water grist mill built of brick and tile, which lacked a house but was otherwise furnished with a stable, hovel, pig sty, small garden, and three pieces of land.[6] The value of the holding was placed at £10 per annum, a modest price consistent with its small size and low value output of cereal grains.

The onset of the Industrial Revolution had an enormous impact on English rural watermills, which were rapidly supplanted by large scale industrial mills equipped with efficient modern instruments like steam engines and water turbines. The fate of Head's Mill was to be no different. While a list of named millers – including the unfortunate Thomas Smith, who lost his life in November 1794 after getting his smock caught in one of the wheels[7] – can be compiled for most of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, they tail off after the early 1840s. Shrawley's 1839 tithe map captures the mill at this late stage, and depicts the building as a simple square structure joined on its west side by an elongated east to west orientated leat fed from two water sources.[8] The first, and probably most important, was the Shrawley Brook, which was diverted into the leat at a junction 230 m west of the mill, while the second is shown as a system of ponds located 1 km to the north-west near Hazelhurst Farm in Sankyn's Green. This arrangement is likely to be a palimpsest, with the secondary channel providing the additional water power needed to move heavier later wheels. In any case, it seems to have fallen out of use within a few years of the map's production, and by the time that the Ordnance Survey depicted the site in 1884–5, all that remained to be seen were the remains of western wall, the wheel pit, and a few traces of the leat channel.

Fig. 3: North-west facing view of the mill race and west wall of the mill building.

The excavations

Investigations at the site were undertaken between April 2012 and October 2014, and involved the recording of upstanding building remains as well as the excavation of seven archaeological trenches. Trench locations were selected mainly on the basis of archaeological potential and significance, although logistical factors (including health and safety considerations) also influenced their placement.

The mill building

Investigations in Trenches 1 and 7 revealed a multi-period sequence of structural features and deposits associated with the construction, alteration, and final abandonment of the mill building. The basic layout of the mill was established at an early date, and was defined by a rectangular footprint of well-dressed ashlar sandstone blocks, which measured 5.96 m long and 5.38 m wide and was orientated north-east to south-west (Fig. 2). The blocks were lain out on a single-range plan, which was split into two rooms (Room 1 in the north, and Room 2 in the south) by an internal partition wall with sandstone footings. These ashlar courses survived to a height of as much as 2.2 m above ground level on the west side, and clearly formed the ground floor walls of what was probably a two-bay and two- or three-storeyed mill with timber-framed upper levels, like the 17th-century examples from Clifton upon Teme and Droitwich Town Mill and Gray Mill in Aston Cantlow, Warwickshire.[9] Entry to the building was via a ground floor doorway in the east wall of Room 1, with passage to Room 2 through a doorway in the centre of the partition wall. The division of these two ground floor rooms almost certainly had a functional basis, separating the machinery and meal floor in the Room 2 from the general purpose space in Room 1. The upper storey or storeys are no longer extant, but would probably have housed the stone floor, where wheat was ground, and possibly a separate bin floor for storing sacks of grain. While it is likely that these upper levels were accessed by an internal ladder, comparison with other early mills suggests that there could also have been a first floor west entrance above Room 1, which might have been accessible via a ramp on the north side of the mill leading to the millpond's retaining wall (see below).

During the 18th and 19th centuries the mill house was subject to several alterations. The most important of these involved the replacement of the timber-framed upper storey(s) with a new brick superstructure, which was erected on the same footprint as the earlier building. Elements of this rebuilding were visible in the upper levels of the west and south exterior walls, which contain surviving courses of unfrogged bricks lain in English garden wall bond with lime mortar. Brick samples taken from these levels had a dark reddish-brown sandy fabric with occasional clay or grog pellet inclusions (Worcestershire CBM Fabric 2c), and were of similar length, width, and thickness to excavated late 17th-century to early 19th-century bricks from Newport Street in Worcester.[10] This phase of rebuilding was also accompanied by the re-roofing of the mill with flat ceramic tiles (Worcestershire CBM Fabric 2c), which probably replaced an earlier thatched roof. The date of this rebuilding is uncertain, but was clearly before 1793, when Lord Foley's Recapitulation describes a building 'made of brick and tile' (see above). Given the evidence of stratigraphy, form, and fabric, it seems likely that the rebuilding of the mill was undertaken as much as a generation earlier, possibly in the mid-18th century.

Lord Foley's Recapitulation states that there was 'no house' in 1793, which suggests that Head's Mill was, for much of its working life, a strictly industrial building, both functionally and physically separate from the 'hovel, pig sty and small garden' occupied by the mill workers. However, excavations in Trench 1 produced some evidence for domestic alterations towards the end of the mill's working life. The most notable of these was the installation of what appears to be a round-backed brick fireplace in the north-east corner of Room 1, which would have posed risks in a

dusty corn mill. Its brickwork displayed limited traces of sooting, so would be consistent with a relatively short period of use. Further evidence for a limited phase of domestic occupation was provided by the latest finds from the mill building, which had a distinctive 'household' character: from mid-19th-century dishes to everyday glass beer bottles.

The wheel and water supply

Recording of standing structures and excavations in Trenches 1–6 provided important insights into the layout and management of the water supply that fed Head's Mill in its heyday. As previously noted (p. 14), by the early 19th century the leat drew water from two separate sources, one of which lay 230 m west of the site along the Shrawley Brook and the other of which was located 1 km to the north-west near Hazelhurst Farm. The latter is possibly a later addition, perhaps dating to the late 18th century, which may have been necessitated by the need to drive larger and heavier wheels. It is now clear from excavations in Trenches 2–6 that the leat fed into a reservoir or pen pool adjoining the west side of the mill building, which was enclosed by a multi-phase retaining wall formed of dressed ashlar sandstone blocks and brickwork. A similar arrangement has been recorded at Galton's Mill in Belbroughton, which was originally established as a corn mill before its conversion to a gun and scythe grinding mill in the 19th century.[11] The water was discharged from the pool through two exits. The primary exit was observed in Trench 3, and was a north-west to south-east orientated brick-lined culvert feeding an overshot waterwheel via a pentrough. The secondary exit, meanwhile, was observed in Trench 2, and was a north-east to south-west orientated sandstone culvert feeding an overflow channel that heads south into the Shrawley Brook. Both culverts contained in-situ cuts for sluice gates, which would have regulated water flow.

The culvert recorded in Trench 3 led directly to the wheel pit, which was partially excavated in the south of Trench 1 and continues into a north-west to south-east aligned culvert that carried water eastwards into the Shrawley Brook. Like the adjoining mill building, the wheel pit had two structural phases, with lower courses formed of dressed ashlar sandstone blocks and upper courses of unfrogged bricks lain in English bond. The departure from English garden wall bond is interesting but of unclear significance, and may simply reflect structural requirements for strong brickwork capable of bearing the load of the associated wheel and machinery. The excavated fill of the wheel pit produced several finds of early date, including specimens of 17th-century clay tobacco pipe.

Evidence for the waterwheel itself was preserved in Trench 1, where large abraded arcs or 'scrapes' were visible on the north and south walls of the wheel pit, and had been caused by contact between the walls and the rotating waterwheel. The dimensions of these arcs were consistent with a vertical wheel measuring 3.4 m (*c.* 11 ft) in diameter and 1.24 m (*c.* 4 ft) in width, and their placement on the walls suggest that there were either two successive 18th- or early 19th-century wheels of this size, or at least that there was one wheel of this size that was repaired and remounted more than once in this period. The wheel size lies at the smaller end of 18th-century rural corn mills, but finds parallels within the West Midlands, including recorded examples from Stoke Prior (13 ft diameter, 6 ft 8 in wide) and from Cesters Over Mill (10 ft diameter, 3 ft 7 in wide) and Long Compton (13ft diameter, 4ft wide) in Warwickshire.[12] The dimensions of the medieval or early post-medieval wheels could not be determined, but are likely to have been rather smaller in size.

The finds

The excavations at Head's Mill produced an assemblage of 403 post-medieval and modern finds (11.5 kg), which were recovered from Trenches 1–4 and 6–7.

The pottery assemblage consisted of 227 sherds (5.49 kg), mostly from the area of the mill building in Trench 1. They were generally unabraded and in good condition, and their mean sherd weight of 24.2 g is

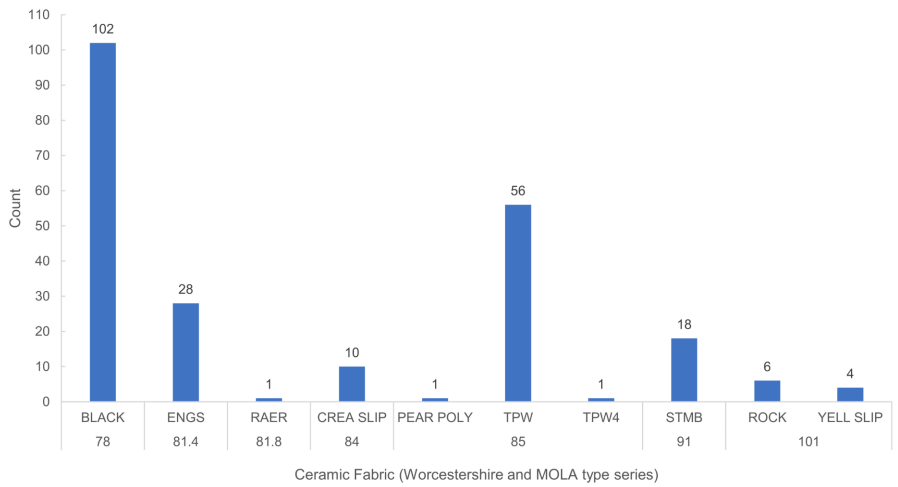


Fig. 4: Quantification of pottery by sherd count, classified by MOLA and Worcestershire Ceramic Fabric Codes

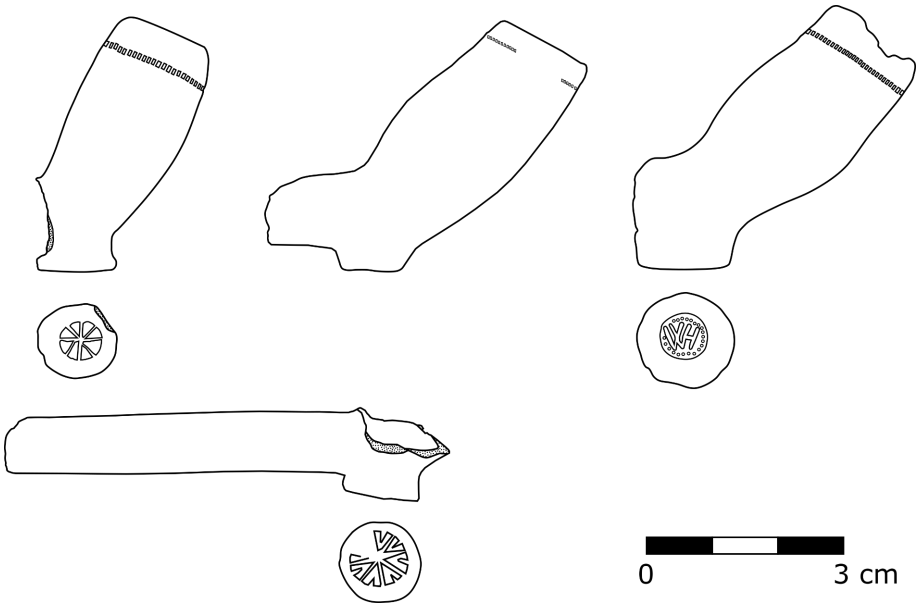


Fig. 5: Selected 17th-century clay tobacco pipes from Head's Mill, Shrawley

consistent with an assemblage drawn mainly from primary or secondary refuse deposits. The range of forms and fabrics (Fig. 4) was broad but dominated by utilitarian household vessels, including post-medieval redware/blackware jars and bowls (1.04 kg), transfer-printed whiteware dishes, plates, saucers, and teacups (3.52 kg), Staffordshire-type marbled slipware dishes (0.43 kg), English stoneware bottles (0.32 kg), creamware mugs with annular or 'mocha' slip decoration (51 g), a Raeren stoneware 'Bartmann' jug (5 g), as well as miscellaneous hollow ware vessels made of pearlware with underglaze polychrome painted decoration (101 g), slip decorated yellow ware (26 g), and Rockingham ware (21 g). Most of these sherds were the output of large post-medieval regional industries, and are common on rural sites in Worcestershire, with similar groups found at Hillside Cottage in Ombersley and Furnace Farm in Shelsley Walsh.[13]

Eighty-one items of metalwork (4.52 kg) were also recovered, including iron (69 objects, 3.83 kg), copper alloy (6 objects, 0.03 kg) and lead (6 objects, 0.66 kg) specimens. The ironwork consisted mostly structural fittings like nails and hinges, but also included a cross-tailed wheel shaft gudgeon found in the fill of the wheel pit. The gudgeon was small, measuring just 220 mm in diameter, and would have fit a small- to medium-sized water wheel, as suggested by evidence from the wheel pit (see above). Most of the copper alloy finds were 18th- and 19th-century buttons, although a George V penny dated 1946 and a Worcester City and County penny token (Withers type 1254) dated 1811 were also found. Issued by the Worcester House of Industry to *'accommodate the public in the present scarcity of small change'*, tokens of this kind were demonetised by Parliament in 1818, so cannot have been in circulation for more than a few years by the time it was lost in the wheel pit.[14]

Aside from the pottery and metalwork, the excavations also produced small but interesting assemblages of other bulk and small finds. The largest consisted of 49 glass fragments (1.03 kg), most of which were from olive-green liquor bottles, including at least two from 18th- or early 19th-century beer bottles. These hint at connections between the mill and nearby towns like Stourport and Worcester, whose beer and spirit vendors plied their wares to ever-wider markets accessed via turnpike roads and canal systems. From a chronological perspective, one of the most important assemblages consisted of clay tobacco pipes, with 35 fragments weighing 144 g. These objects came from Trenches 1–2, 4, and 6–7, and their bowl forms and stem bore measurements were consistent with a group formed mainly of pipes dated *c.*1660–1750 (Fig. 5). The diagnostic bowls were all of West Midland types, including forms typical of Broseley/Much Wenlock and the north Herefordshire/south Shropshire manufactories, and include an example with the initials WH in a pellet border. This design has been attributed to William Hughes of Broseley, and is paralleled by a find from Newport Street in Worcester.[15]

Six incomplete fragments of millstones (236 g) were also recorded, of which five (90 g) were of millstone grit, and one (126 g) of French burr. The latter was fine and well-suited for grinding wheat, and was probably composite bound in an iron hoop, a common arrangement in the 18th and 19th centuries.[16]

Conclusion

The results from the 2012–14 investigations at Head's Mill provide new insights into the form, function, and working history of one of the many corn mills that dotted the Worcestershire countryside in the centuries between the Middle Ages and the Victorian era.

Based on the results from fieldwork and documentary study, at least four phases of development can be traced at Head's Mill. The medieval complex, which probably consisted of a timber-framed mill and water-

wheel fed by a leat running from the Shrawley Brook, was not traced in the excavations, which likely reflects a methodological focus on the excavation of deposits overlying later floor levels. The earliest remains that were identified instead dated to the 17th century, and relate to a phase of extensive remodelling in which many of the extant structures were first lain down. This new complex consisted of a two- or three-storeyed mill building built of stone and timber with a thatched roof, connected on its south side to an overshot waterwheel powered by a reservoir or pen pool fed via a leat from the Shrawley Brook. Similar forms and phases of 17th-century (re-)construction are known at other watermills in Worcestershire and Warwickshire (see p. 15), and raise questions about the relationship between investment in rural industrial and domestic buildings during the 'Great Rebuilding'. In the case of Head's Mill, the source of investment is also open to question. While the mill is known to have been leased at this time to the Severn family, the scale of works would require considerable capital outlays beyond their means, so may instead represent a traditional seigneurial investment by the lord of the manor – perhaps Thomas Childe of Northwick, who held both moieties of Shrawley from the mid-1660s, or instead his successors Allan Cliffe I and II, who held the manor from 1681 to 1700.

Though smaller in scale, 18th- and 19th-century alterations to the mill complex can also be identified, which were probably commissioned in a similar manner by the Vernons and the Foleys as lords of the manor. The mid-18th century saw important changes to the mill building, including the replacement of the timber upper storeys with brick and the relaying of the thatched roof with ceramic tiles; it may also be at this time that the stable, hovel, and pig sty mentioned in Lord Foley's 1793 Recapitulation were first built, although no remains of these buildings were identified during excavations. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries major alterations were made to the mill's water supply, which was now supplemented by a second leat fed from a source near Hazelhurst Farm. This enabled a new 3.4 m diameter waterwheel to be installed, larger than its predecessor yet only modest by contemporary standards. However, like so many of Lord Foley's investments, these were destined to yield poor returns, and it is clear from the finds assemblage that the site had ceased to function as a working mill by the 1840s or 1850s.

The demise of Heads Mill in the mid-19th century was a fate shared with many other rural English corn mills, which faced competitive pressures from new industrial roller mills able to take advantage of cheap foreign grain imported after the repeal of the Corn Laws. While some could be profitably put to alternative use, this was evidently not the case at Head's Mill, whose small size and isolated position made it a poor candidate for repurposing.[17] While there is slight evidence for the remodelling of the mill building as a domestic residence, this phase of activity seems to have been very short lived, and had evidently ceased by the time the ruins of the mill were first depicted by the Ordnance Survey in 1884–5. By the turn of the 20th century these had been partially demolished and buried beneath layers of tree mulch and alluvium lain down by the flooding of the Shrawley Brook, and by 1903 all that remained to be seen were traces of brick and stone near the retaining wall of the infilled reservoir. Within a generation, any living memory of the working mill would have passed away.

References

1. British Geological Survey, 2024 *BGS Geology Viewer* [online]. Available at: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer> [Accessed 6 May 2024].

2. Hooke, D., 1990 *Worcestershire Anglo-Saxon Charter Bounds*, Woodbridge, 68–78.

3. Worcester, Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service (WAAS), Ref 705:66 BA 4221/7/ii.

4. WAAS Ref 705:192 BA 5589/46.

5. WAAS Ref 899:31 BA 3676/xix.

6. Held among the Foley papers at Herefordshire Archive Service.

7. *Worcester Herald*, 15 November 1794, 2.

8. Kew, The National Archives (TNA), IR 30/39/123.

9. Mann, A., *et al.*, 2015 'Excavations at Town Mill, Hanbury Road, Droitwich, Worcestershire', *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser. 25, 179–90; Booth, D.T.N., 1978 *Warwickshire Watermills*, s.l., 21.

10. Crawford, A., 2015 'Ceramic Building Material: Bricks', in P. Davenport (ed.), *Excavations at Newport Street, Worcester, 2005. Roman Roadside Activity and Medieval to Post-Medieval Urban Development on the Severn Floodplain*, Cirencester, 140–5.

11. Pagett, R., 1993 *Water Mill Sites in North Worcestershire*, Hagley, 15.

12. Booth, *op. cit.* in fn. 9, 5–7; Tucker, G.T., 1982 'Watermills of the River Salwarpe and its Tributaries. Part 2: The System outside Bromsgrove', *Wind and Water Mills* 3, 2–19. Larger and wider wheels were more typical from the mid-19th century onwards: Brown, J., 2011 *Water Power and Watermills: An Historical Guide*, Marlborough, 95–101.

13. Andrews, M., Llewellyn F., and Potter-Farrant, K., 2023 'New light on an old farm: test pit excavations at Hillgrove, Ombersley', *Worcestershire Recorder* 108, 11–16; Potter-Farrant, K., and Andrews, M., 2022 'Life and work in rural Worcestershire: investigations at Furnace Farm, Shelsley Walsh', *Worcestershire Recorder* 106, 16–19.

14. The chronology and circulation of the tokens of the Worcester House of Industry has been recently reviewed in Andrews, M., 2023 'A Countermarked 19th-Century Worcester Penny Token', *Token Corresponding Society Bulletin* 14:5, 176–7.

15. Atkinson, D.R., 1975 *Tobacco Pipes of Broseley, Shropshire*, Saffron Walden, 62; Peacey, A., 2015 'Clay tobacco pipes', in P. Davenport (ed.), *Excavations at Newport Street, Worcester, 2005. Roman Roadside Activity and Medieval to Post-Medieval Urban Development on the Severn Floodplain*, Cirencester, 169–88. The dominant role of Shropshire and Herefordshire manufactories in Worcestershire's 17th- and 18th-century clay tobacco pipe market is reflected locally in finds from Astley Burf: Andrews, M., 2022 'Clay Tobacco Pipes from Astley', *Worcestershire Recorder* 105, 18–20.

16. Tucker, D.G., 1977 'Millstones, Quarries, and Millstone-Makers', *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 11, 1–21.

17. By contrast, local examples of adaptive reuse can be identified on the Belne Brook at Galton's Mill and on the Wannerton Brook at Churchill Mill, which were turned over to scythe grinding and tool sharpening: Pagett, *op. cit.* in fn. 11.

Book Reviews

Saint Simon de Montfort: the Miracles, Laments, Prayers, and Hymns. Edited and translated by David Cox. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2024. Pp. 202. Price £65.00. ISBN 9781837650842

Reviewed by Robin Whittaker

For fifteen years between 1265 and 1280 the monks of Evesham Abbey promoted a cult of Simon de Montfort against a background of official government disapproval. This produced a range of prayers, hymns, and laments, as well as a book of miracles.

In this new volume in the Boydell Medieval Texts series, Dr David Cox, our foremost authority on all things relating to Evesham, has edited and translated the whole corpus in an exemplary edition. He explains how Iris Pinkstone, founder of the Simon de Montfort Society, had always wanted to see a translation of the book of miracles, edited once before in 1840 by James Halliwell in an unsatisfactory edition. This Dr Cox has now done, together with an edition and translation of all the various other writings, sometimes previously published, but in hard-to-find places and with varying accuracy.

The structure of the edition is clear and logical, giving the present-day reader all they need to interrogate this body of evidence about the aftermath of Simon's defeat, how contemporaries reacted to it, and the religious and political feelings aroused. A lucid introduction is followed by a detailed and exhaustive catalogue of all the texts, manuscripts, and previous editions. Then comes the texts and translations themselves, helpfully printed on facing pages for ease of reference, and comprehensively annotated, with finally a full bibliography and index.

The introduction makes for fascinating reading. He sets the miracle book in the context of contemporary practice, suggesting that the Evesham monks may have used an earlier miracle book relating to the cult of St Wulfsige as an exemplar. Each miracle account noted the name of the recipient of the miracle, where they lived, the nature of the miracle and, importantly, who else could vouch for the story. The monks wished to make the accounts credible and verifiable. A typical example will give a flavour of the information in the entries: *'Lettice Palmer from Oxford had a useless arm and a feeble hand for a year and a half but after being measured to the earl she recovered. And in token of the cure she brought a waxen arm to Evesham. The whole parish of St Ebbe the virgin in Oxford bears witness to this'*.

Dr Cox is able to date the bulk of the entries to between 1265 and 1272, with a falling off between 1272 and 1280, after which the cult had declined and reached virtual extinction. Despite official efforts to discourage or prevent pilgrims, clearly many made the journey, either to the abbey itself or to the Earl's Well at the top of Greenhill, leading to an influx of cash for the Abbey enabling them to fund building works such as the Lady Chapel. The miracles largely concerned the healing of various chronic ailments and mental illnesses, as well as saving people after potentially fatal accidents. Dr Cox also explores the geographical extent of the cult, largely centred on the Midlands and the east of England, and often with connections to Montfortian estates or those of his supporters. As many subjects of the cures had not been able to visit the tomb itself, I was fascinated to discover the way the potential miracle could be sought at a distance. There are repeated references to being 'measured to the earl', whereby the patient or affected part was measured with a piece of string in the name of the 'saint', the string sometimes then being used to make the wick of a candle that could be sent as an offering. An alternative method was to bend a penny in his name. All in all, these accounts of miracles give a vivid snapshot of mediaeval life and piety, reflecting real experiences of named people, many of whom do not appear in the record in any other way.

The laments, prayers, and hymns reflect the distress felt after the upheavals of the Montfortian revolt, lamenting the death of the earl, bemoaning the sufferings in the wake of his death and expressing a strong desire for peace and justice. By *c*.1280, however, no further laments appear to have been written, as royal policy began to mitigate the post-revolt social conflict.

There had never been any realistic chance that Simon would be canonised – the royalists in 1266 had asked the Papal Legate to forbid anyone to call Earl Simon a saint or speak of his 'vain and fatuous miracles' – but for a few years there was a strong, if short-lived, cult. That a layman had attracted a miracle cult was in itself extremely rare, reflecting the passions that had animated the whole Montfortian revolt. Thereafter Simon was not forgotten, but was seen as a figure of moral and historical interest. Dr Cox's excellent new edition helps us all understand better a rare expression of popular religion in the late 13th century, as well as giving us an insight into many 'ordinary' lives.

Three Choirs Festival in Ten Concerts. By S. Carpenter. Logaston, Eardisley, 2024. Pp. 176, illus. Price £12.99. ISBN 9781910839751.

Reviewed by Caroline Hillaby

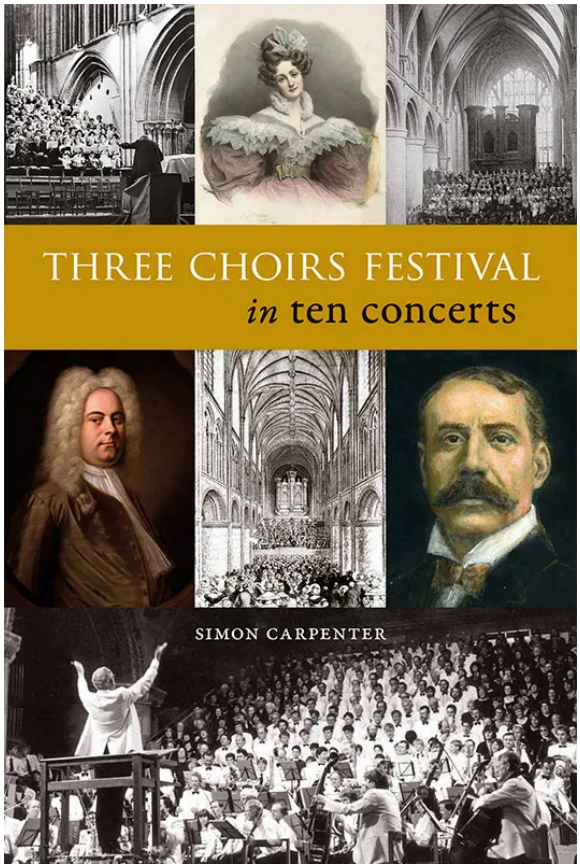
'A feature of the Festival over its long history is its championing of new music'; hence this book. One would think that, having compiled a list of more than 600 premieres that have taken place at the Three Choirs Festival, Simon Carpenter would be hard put to choose his ten concerts. Fortunately for him, however, 'Eight names immediately sprang to mind' as some of the composers most associated with the festival: Hubert Parry, Alice Mary Smith, Rosalind Ellicott, Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells, Gustav Holst and Gerald Finzi'. The two women, the least known of course, share a chapter.

Inevitably, the first chapter belongs to Handel's Messiah. Premiered in Dublin in 1742, its long association with the Festival commenced in 1757, some 40 years after its founding. Considered a secular work, it was performed at the Boothall, Gloucester, but from 1759 oratorios took place in the cathedrals. The orchestra of trumpets, kettle drums, hautboys, bassoons, double basses, violins and violoncellos numbered about 20, with a chorus of some 50. The conductor William Hayes was paid half as much as the leading soloist, Giulia Frasi, 'Handel's Last Prima Donna', one of several outstanding soloists commissioned. Subsequently the Messiah was performed, in part at least, at most festivals until 1963; the full score published in 1767.

Until 1834 performances were treated as religious services, and sung by the cathedral choirs in the choir. The second chapter follows the move to the nave. Space was also a factor, with performer numbers increasing significantly, from 177 in 1823 to nearly 300 in 1850; audience numbers boosted by the advent of railways, increased to over 600. More recently, however, health and safety regulations etc have reduced the size of the chorus from almost 300 in 1969 to little more than 120, leading to 'balance issues between chorus and orchestra'. The 1834 festival was held at Hereford, where Wesley, a fan of Spohr, was organist, 1832–5. Finding here 'a mass of error and inferiority', he moved to Exeter, Leeds and Winchester before his final post at Gloucester 1865–76, in which year he died.

Wesley was a close acquaintance of Hubert Parry's father at Highnam Court, and took the young student under his wing. Parry, whose works had been performed as early as 1865, made his Festival debut three years later, aged only 20, with the premiere of his *Intermezzo Religioso*. Overall this was well received, his talent deserving 'far more recognition and encouragement' than was accorded. The local organists were not trained as conductors and Wesley's appointment saw a shift to professional conductors though, despite his 'high musicianship and brilliant achievement as composer and organist' he was regarded as 'distinctly a non-conductor'. Performances were lengthy: according to Parry one day's events lasted from 11.30 to 5.15 with half an hour for lunch, and then 7.45 to 11.15 pm. Parry's connection with the Festival lasted nearly half a century, with some of his finest works premiered at Gloucester festivals. In 1880 his *Prometheus Unbound*, 'an ambitious choral work of wide scope and poetic ambition' based on Shelley's poem, was considered by some – though not Holst – to mark the 'modern Renaissance' in English music; the 250-strong chorus included singers from London, Bristol, Oxford and Huddersfield. Parry became Director of the Royal College of Music in 1895.

Not until 1882, when Alice Mary Smith's *Ode to the Passions*, a setting of William Collins' poem, was premiered at Hereford, did the Festival include music composed by a woman. Smith (aka Mrs Meadows White) was a prolific composer, whose C minor Symphony was the first to be written by a British woman; a 2005 recording by the London Mozart Players of this 'fine work' was awarded a Penguin Guide Rosette. Another leading female composer, Rosalind Ellicott, whose father was bishop of Gloucester, sang one of her own songs at the same



festival, and had several other works performed at later Gloucester festivals. She claimed to be able to 'compose five different compositions in my head at the same time'. Later came Dame Ethel Smyth, the first woman composer to be 'seen or heard as a conductor in a cathedral', shown conducting *The Wreckers* in 1925; and Elizabeth Maconchy, whose *And Death shall have no dominion* was premiered in 1969, when Adrian Partington was a choir boy. Since then many other women have seen first performances of their works at the Festival. Wikipedia offers an impressive list of female composers.

Elgar's composing and conducting debut at the Festival introduced his *Froissart* overture at Worcester in 1890; 'He will one day arrive', it was opined. Other premieres followed in 1896 and 1897, and two years later Elgar conducted the *Enigma Variations* at Worcester, the first of many works conducted by him before the war. After the war, Elgar was 'the uncrowned monarch' of the Festival until 1933 when he conducted the *Kingdom*, *Dream of Gerontius,* and *Cello Concerto* at Hereford. His music continues to feature at the Festival. The illustrations include one of Elgar and Beatrice Harrison rehearsing the *Cello Concerto* in 1919.

A 'distinguished gathering of guest performers' in 1910 included Fritz Kreisler, who gave the premiere of Elgar's Violin Concerto at Gloucester. Here Vaughan Williams premiered his *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, having 'chosen his forces with the Norman architecture in mind'. Its reception was generally tepid, but a teenage Howells was blown away, later describing it as 'a supreme commentary by one great composer upon another', and it quickly established itself, being broadcast by the BBC as early as 1926 and recorded by Decca in 1936. Eight other works by Vaughan Williams were premiered at the Festival, most recently in 2001 when *Whispers of Heavenly Death*, composed in 1908 but only recently rediscovered, was performed at Gloucester.

Elgar was a great champion of new music, and Herbert Howells was one of the composers invited by Elgar to write a new work for the 1922 festival at Gloucester, at which 27 British works were performed. Howells' 'Phantasy for Orchestra', *Sine Nomine*, received mixed reviews, one referring to 'the sense of mystery evoked by those singularly beautiful pages'; its next hearing was 70 years later, in 1972. Howells contributed five further new works to the Festival, his *Paradise Rondel* being included in the first Three Choirs concert to be broadcast live on the BBC, in 1928. Howells conducted his *Hymnus Paradisi* at Gloucester in 1950, the 15th anniversary of his ten-year-old son's death. Nearly 40 years after Howell's own death in 1983, three newly discovered works and his cello concerto were premiered in 2021.

His sesquicentenary falling on 21 September, several works by Holst were performed at Worcester this year, including his *Hymn of Jesus*, the first of his pieces to be performed at the Festival, in 1921, and *The Cloud Messenger*. Holst's first festival premiere was *The Evening Watch*, performed at Gloucester in 1925 to mixed reviews; the Guardian suggested the singers had 'to perform it with wool in their ears so as to concentrate on their own parts'. His *Choral Fantasia* was premiered in 1931. The year 1925, the 'high point of Brewer's career', saw more new works than ever, with 34 British composers, 25 of them living, and 15 conducting their own works. Brewer persuaded the tax authorities to exempt the Festival from entertainment tax, which saw £3,700 being given to charity. That year also saw the introduction of BBC broadcasts, and loudspeakers, bringing concerts to people at home and abroad; Delius listened to his *On hearing the first cuckoo* from France.

The penultimate chapter opens with a photograph of Finzi conducting *Lo, the full, final sacrifice* at Gloucester in 1947. Two years later he conducted the premiere of his *Clarinet Concerto* at Hereford. The outbreak of war prevented that of *Dies Natalis*, setting texts by Thomas Traherne, which took place instead at Wigmore Hall the following year. *Intimations of Immortality* was premiered at the 1950 Festival, and *in Terra Pax* in 1956, sung 'magnificently' in Finzi's words. Tragically, he died later that month, aged only 55.

Finally, in 1969 applause broke out, a spontaneous response to the National Youth Orchestra. Hitherto it had not been deemed seemly to have applause in a cathedral. The last chapter includes a look at the 'new brooms', including 'ambitious organists' at all three cathedrals. Rules regarding the audience seating were relaxed, and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, composed in 1931 but considered unsuitable for the Festival, was at last permitted to be performed. Among the many changes recalled by Adrian Partington was the introduction of girl choristers.

The book includes lively reviews, both good and bad, of compositions, performances and performers, and has an excellent appendix of key figures in the text. The illustrations, many courtesy of Derek Foxton, are wonderful. As well as the main subjects of the book and others mentioned here, they include one of nineteen 'famous living British composers' in 1908, and a splendid portrait of John Sims Reeves, who was engaged by Wesley in 1868, courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery. As someone who sang with the Hereford Choral Society under Roy Massey, Hereford's longest serving organist, at the beginning of his time there (1974–2001), I was delighted to see him with the Festival Chorus in 1991 on the cover and frontispiece, since he does not feature in the text itself. Occasional errors include *And Death shall have no [more] dominion.*

Events

September 2024

13 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'Saving the Worcester News archives from the skip' by Chris Wilkinson. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

16 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'Historic Building Mythbusting in the Marches' by James Wright. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

16 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'Postcards from the Past' . Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

16 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'The Irish in the Victorian Black Country' by Simon Briercliffe. Online via Zoom.

17 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'Light & Colour: Our Heritage in Stained Glass Windows' by Roy Albutt. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

25 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'The Stourbridge Glass Industry' by Kate Round. Tickets £5. Bilston Town Hall, Church St, Bilston WV14 0AP.

October 2024

6 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'The 5th- to 6th-century mosaic at Chedworth Roman Villa' by Martin Papworth. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

12 (7pm) Friends of the Centre for Midlands History & Cultures. 'A Disreputable History of the Newhall Estate' by John Townley. Online via Zoom.

15 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'Dudley Castle' by Elaine Joyce. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

21 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'Prior Walcher and Malvern Priory' by Don Bradley. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

21 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'The Life and Legacy of Eliza Tinsley: Black Country Nail Mistress (1813-1882)' by Rebecca Wilton. Online via Zoom.

22 (2pm) Wyre Forest Historical Research Group. 'Harvington Hall, the House of Secrets' by Phil Downing. Tickets £3. Museum of Carpet, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1AZ.

23 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. ''Over by Christmas?' Black Country civilians and the outbreak of the Great War' by Quint Watt. Tickets £5. Bilston Town Hall, Church St, Bilston WV14 0AP.

28 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'The Body on the Bromyard Line' by Emma Hancox. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

November 2024

9 (10am) Black Country Society. 'Black Country History Day: Buildings, Heritage and the Built Environment in the Black Country'. Tickets £30. Black Country Living Museum, Discovery Way, Dudley DY1 4AL.

15 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'The History & Heritage of Shelsley Water Mill' by Max Hunt. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

18 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'Pevsner Revisited: Reflections on the Revision Programme, with special reference to the West Midlands counties' by Chris Pickford. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

18 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. ''Arsenic in Madresfield, Brimstone in Diglis: Remains and Records from Two sites of Victorian Agricultural Improvement' by Tim Carter. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

18 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'Crooked Britain: the Crooked House at Himley and some crooked survivors' by Steve Roughton. Online via Zoom.

19 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'Roman Droitwich' by Andrew Harris. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

27 (5pm) Friends of the Centre for Midlands History & Cultures. '"Orchid Jo": Empire, Satire, and Political Self-Fashioning' by Victoria Mills. Arts Building Room 104, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston Campus, B15 2TT, and online via Zoom.

December 2024

3 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'The Monarch's Way' by Howard Robinson. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

6 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'Chaddeston Flint Mill' by John Outram. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

9 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'The continuing importance of the manor in late sixteenth-century England: the example of the Blounts of the West Midlands' by Elizabeth Norton. Online via Zoom.

9 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'The Blue Brick Industry of the Black Country' by Elizabeth Thomson. Online via Zoom.

January 2025

13 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'An Evening of Shorter Talks on Recent and Current Research' by members of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society. Online via Zoom.

20 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'The Soho Manufactory, Mint, and Foundry' by George Demidowicz. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

21 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy and Stately Homes' by Philip Bowen. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

24 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'Four Worcester Buildings' by James Dinn. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

February 2025

3 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'Excavations at Nesscliffe Camp: an unusual hillfort in Shropshire' by Gary Lock. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

4 (8pm) Hagley Historical and Field Society. 'Early Years at Soho' by Mary Bodfish. Tickets £2. St Saviour's Church Hall, West Hagley DY9 0NS.

10 (2pm) Redditch History Society. 'Merry England's Folklore Calendar: Through the Year in Custom and Song' by Paul Mortimer. Tickets £4. Oasis Christian Centre, 4 Plymouth Rd, Redditch B97 4QB

17 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'Rural industries in Worcestershire before the Railways' by Richard Churchley. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

17 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'James Keir (1785-1820): Innovation, the Lunar Society and inventing the Black Country' by Malcolm Dick. Online via Zoom.

18 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'The Halesowen Branch (including 'The

Austin')' by David Waldren. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

18 (7.30pm) Chaddesley Corbett Local History Society. 'The Great Wall of Kidderminster' by Michael Loftus. Village Hall, Chaddesley Corbett DY10 4AQ.

20 (7pm) Friends of the Centre for Midlands History & Cultures. 'Variety and Choice: Birmingham Buttons and New Modes of Making ' by Jen Dixon. Online via Zoom.

21 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'William Morris' by Max Hunt. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

22–23 (10am) Museums Worcestershire. 'Living History 2025'. Tickets £9 and concessions. The Commandery, Sidbury, Worcester WR1 2HU.

24 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'Sounds in the Landscape' by Della Hooke. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

25 (2pm) Wyre Forest Historical Research Group. 'Life in the Carpet Factories of Kidderminster' by Dave Laverty. Tickets £3. Museum of Carpet, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1AZ.

26 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. ''A Cause of Immense Benefit' – Episodes from Black Country Canal History' by Phil Clayton. Tickets £5. Bilston Town Hall, Church St, Bilston WV14 0AP.

March 2025

4 (8pm) Hagley Historical and Field Society. 'A Century of Popular Songs: 1860s to 1960s' by Richard Churchley. Tickets £2. St Saviour's Church Hall, West Hagley DY9 0NS.

10 (2pm) Redditch History Society. 'The Lunar Society' by Peter Borg-Bartolo. Tickets £4. Oasis Christian Centre, 4 Plymouth Rd, Redditch B97 4QB

11 (6.30pm) Worcester Civic Society. 'Early Flight in Worcester' by Mike Mullins. Swan Theatre Foyer, The Moors, Worcester WR1 3ED.

14 (7.30pm) Malvern Civic Society. 'Malvern Hills Trust, from 1884 to 2024' by Deborah Fox. Tickets £3. Eden Centre, Grovewood Rd, Malvern WR14 1GD.

17 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. AGM, followed by 'An Early Neolithic Saltern at Street House, North Yorkshire' by Stephen Sherlock. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

17 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'Medieval Heraldic Graffiti in Worcestershire Churches' by Vicky Fletcher. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

18 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'Tales from the Coroner's Casebook' by Quintin Watt. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

18 (7.30pm) Chaddesley Corbett Local History Society. 'Bessie Blount of Kinlet' by Robert Hodge. Village Hall, Chaddesley Corbett DY10 4AQ.

25 (2pm) Wyre Forest Historical Research Group. 'Katherine of Aragon' by Gillian White. Tickets £3. Museum of Carpet, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1AZ.

26 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'An Ecclesiastical Affair' by Chris Baker. Online via Zoom.

24 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'A Lifetime Through the Lens' by Robin Hill. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

27 (7.30pm) Vale of Evesham Historical Society. 'Worcestershire Coaching Inns' by Julian Hunt. Tickets £5. Friends Meeting House, 28 Cowl St, Evesham WR11 4PN.

April 2025

7 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'The archaeology of Worcester Cathedral's Undercroft Meeting and Learning Centre' by Fiona Keith-Lucas. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

11 (7.30pm) Malvern Civic Society. 'Malvern Hills Trust, from 1884 to 2024' by David Prescott. Tickets £3. Eden Centre, Grovewood Rd, Malvern WR14 1GD.

14 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'Charles Voysey' by Ian Lloyd-Oswell. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

18 (7.30pm) Chaddesley Corbett Local History Society. 'Beyond the Seas' by David Clark. Village Hall, Chaddesley Corbett DY10 4AQ.

22 (2pm) Wyre Forest Historical Research Group. 'Easy as ABC' by Mary Bodfish. Tickets £3. Museum of Carpet, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1AZ.

25 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology & Local History Society. 'Kidderminster Station' by Jim Smeaton. Tickets £2. Eld Hall, RGS Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester WR1 1HP.

28 (7.30pm) Worcestershire Archaeological Society. 'The Berkeley Lecture: A Tale of Two Worcestershire Towns. What do we learn from the ups and downs of Alvechurch and Broadway?' by Christopher Dyer. The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester WR1 2PD.

26 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'A New Home: a tale of efforts to secure a permanent and suitable facility for the internationally-renowned Stourbridge Glass collection' by Graham Fisher. Online via Zoom.

May 2025

9 (7.30pm) Malvern Civic Society. 'The Madresfield Estate' by Jonathan Chenevix-Trench. Tickets £3. Eden Centre, Grovewood Rd, Malvern WR14 1GD.

19 (10.30am) Malvern U3A Archaeology Group. 'Herefordshire Romanesque' by Bob Ruffle. Tickets £3. Malvern Link United Reform Church, Worcester Rd, Malvern WR14 1SS.

20 (7.15pm) Bromsgrove Society. 'The Cadbury Connection' by Daniel Callicot. Tickets £4. Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, Stratford Rd, Bromsgrove B60 1AS.

28 (7.30pm) Black Country Society. 'From the Black Country to Brazil' by Keith Robinson. Tickets £5. Bilston Town Hall, Church St, Bilston WV14 0AP.

Exhibitions

Bewdley Museum & Art Gallery

Load St, Bewdley, DY12 2AE.

'Paintings from the Collection', 10am to 4.30pm, 1 March until 6 April 2025. Free.

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Chamberlain Sq, Birmingham, B3 3DH.

'Rembrandt: Masterpieces in Black and White', 10am to 5pm, 6 March until 1 June 2025. £15.50 and concessions.

Worcester City Museum & Art Gallery

Foregate St, Worcester, WR1 1DT.

'The Worcestershire Conquest Hoard', 10:00am to 4.00pm, 11 January until 30 March 2025. Free.

'Elizabeth and Stanhope Forbes: a Marriage of Art', 10:00am to 4.00pm, 5 April until 29 June 2025. £6 and concessions.

'H.H. Lines: Architecture, Archaeology, and Art', 10:00am to 4.00pm, 4 January until June 2025. Free.

WAS Lecture Programme 2024-25

Meetings take place at 7.30pm. Instructions of how to join Zoom meetings will be emailed to members in advance.

16 September	**Historic Building Mythbusting in the Marches** *James Wright (Triskele Heritage)* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
6 October	**The 5th- to 6th-century mosaic at Chedworth Roman villa** *Martin Papworth (National Trust)* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
28 October	**The body on the Bromyard Line** *Emma Hancox (Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service)* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
18 November	**Pevsner revisited – Reflections on the revision programme, with special reference to the West Midlands counties** *Chris Pickford* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
9 December	**The continuing importance of the manor in late sixteenth century England: the example of the Blounts of the West Midlands** *Elizabeth Norton* Venue: Online via Zoom
13 January	**An evening of shorter talks on recent and current research (programme to be announced nearer the time)** Venue: Online via Zoom
3 February	**Excavations at Nesscliffe Camp: an unusual hillfort in Shropshire** *Gary Lock (University of Oxford)* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
24 February	**Sounds in the Landscape** *Della Hooke* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
17 March	**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by: An Early Neolithic Saltern at Street House, North Yorkshire** *Stephen Sherlock* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
7 April	**The archaeology of Worcester Cathedral's Undercroft Meeting and Learning Centre** *Fiona Keith-Lucas (Worcester Cathedral)* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD
28 April	**THE BERKELEY LECTURE: A tale of two Worcestershire towns: what do we learn from the ups and downs of Alvechurch and Broadway?** *Christopher Dyer (University of Leicester)* Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Close, Worcester WR1 3PD

Items for the next issue should be sent to the Editor by **1 August 2025**. Submissions are via email at recorder@worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk.